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REVIEWS.

Theology and the Social Consciousness. By HENRY CHURCHILL KING. New York : The Macmillan Co., 1902. Pp. 252.

PROFESSOR KING defines what he means by the "social consciousness" by analyzing the sense of the like-mindedness of men, the sense of the mutual influence of men, the sense of the value and sacredness of the person, the sense of obligation, and the sense of love. He finds the ultimate explanation and ground of the social consciousness in the immanence of God and his supporting will. Then he traces the influence of the social consciousness upon the conception of religion and upon theological doctrine.

What is the interest of the sociologist in such discussions? Professor King makes his own statement of the relation of theology to sociology (p. 5): the theologian interprets, but does not attempt to explain; it is sociology which traces the processes of phenomena in causal connections. The sociologist, as such, is interested in the inquiry of this volume first of all because religious factors are social facts. This is as obvious to the agnostic as to the theologian. Sociology must deal with all causal elements, even with those which are detestable. Religious ideas, feelings, purposes, actions, customs, and institutions are social phenomena and part of the causative facts in history. Society might be better or worse without religion, but it indubitably would be different.

Theological studies like the one under our notice tend to illuminate these regions of social consciousness, to reveal the nature of the contents of religious experience, and to measure the forces here at work. The book before us is a fine example of the perspicacity and subtle analysis of facts which are best known from the inside, facts which can be described only by one instructed by sympathy. But sociology does not stop with explanation and causal connections of social phenomena; that is, with theory; it is also and inevitably a practical science; it deals with practice. Practical social science transcends the merely mechanical and physical methods of reasoning, which are inadequate even in theory, and it treats of associations of persons who aim at ends on which they set a value and who put forth conscious

and costly efforts to further and realize these ends because they set a value on them.

In practical social science this valuation of ends is vital, for without an estimate of worth which may be used as a criterion there is no rational and solid basis for a judgment of any social arrangement.

Practical social science must consider two problems when it passes judgment, or arranges the materials for a judgment, on any social arrangement, device, movement, or tendency: Is the end valuable and the most valuable, all things considered? and, Are the proposed means most suitable and efficient? The latter, it is conceivable, might be studied somewhat apart from the former. The sociologist might reserve his verdict as to the end and merely say: "Assuming that the proposed object is socially valuable, what is the best disposition of available social forces to attain it?"

But, after all, human reason would regard such a solution as superficial and unsatisfactory. There is no way of avoiding a discussion of the worth of ends in a study of the value of institutions, systems, laws, customs, or tendencies. In the case before us the end is religious satisfactions.

At this point an attempt to study the meaning and value of religion and the theological implications of the social consciousness is useful to sociology, whether we are thinking of it as an explanatory or as a practical science.

The alternative of agnosticism, of course, is still open, and there is no absolute demonstration of the ism which would make unbelief impossible. Taste and preference may not be forced.

The case of religion is the same as that of friendship, or knowledge, or art, or moral character. The man who has personal experience of these values can bear witness to them, nothing more. They must be personally taken into consciousness by active and creative choice, and then they are seen in their true nature and "proof" is not asked.

What a skilful art critic or interpreter does for pictures, music, or verse, Professor King has done, with a high degree of success, for religion.

CHARLES R. HENDERSON.

Savings and Savings Institutions. By JAMES HENRY HAMILTON.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902. Pp. 436.

THE economic principles of thrift are discussed under the head of "The Theory of Savings," but while the orthodox position is clearly